



Short Safety Subject

MOTION INJURIES

Taking the time to think about everyday tasks and their affects on our bodies is a good way to prevent injuries. The following scenarios will demonstrate how inadequate planning leads to pain and disability, affecting on-and-off-the-job activities.

At the breakfast table you rush to clean everything up before going to work. You stretch awkwardly across the table to lift your infant baby out of the highchair. Half standing, you start to lift your baby, but then stop, reacting to a sharp pain in your back. Instead of using your leg muscles to lift, you used your back muscles and are consequently suffering back pain.

In the warehouse, you notice some boxes on the floor. These boxes are in the way of pedestrian traffic and so you proceed to move them. You know that the boxes could be heavy but you do not want to bother anyone to help you. You bend over at the waist to lift one box but have to stop because the load is too heavy and you feel a sudden pain in your back. As a result, you strain your back muscle - an injury that may keep you off the job for several days.

In this next scenario, you are a production-line worker who packs boxes as they pass by on a conveyor. Throughout the day, you perform the same set of lifting and twisting motions with your arms. You begin to experience pain in your forearms and sometimes it aches so much that you can't sleep. The repetitive nature of your work has stressed your arm tendons, muscles and nerves.

What could have been done to avoid the motion injuries mentioned above? You could have thought about the task at hand and applied the TAKE principle (Talk, Actions, Knowledge, Equipment) checklist: **Talk** to your supervisor about how to perform the job safely. Think about how your **actions** will affect safety. **Know** the right rules and procedures for the job. Use the proper **equipment** and keep it in good condition.

Keeping the above scenarios in mind, ask yourselves and your co-workers these questions:

- 1) Do we always think carefully about posture and proper techniques when lifting?
- 2) Why do we sometimes ignore our body and safety?
 - Busy work schedule
 - Think that "it won't happen to me."

- Lack of knowledge

- Under stress

3) What is the procedure for lifting safely?

- Make sure you are close to the object and are not bending over to lift

- Keep back straight and use leg muscles to lift

- Don't twist or stretch excessively.

4) How can we help prevent repetitive motion injuries?

- Take breaks to stretch and relax

- Rotate work stations; change positions

Living in a stressful society where time is money and deadlines are of the utmost importance, it is easy to get so caught up in what you are doing that you forget about taking care of your body. But think about the consequences of having an injury where you can't work, play, or spend any time with your family and friends. Think of how badly an injury makes you feel (physically and emotionally) and all the extra work and lost wages you have to make up for when you come back to work. Isn't your body worth an extra few minutes to do the tasks correctly and safely?
